

SOUTHWEST COORDINATING GROUP (SWCG)

August 18 - 19, 2004 Meeting Minutes

National Park Service Office, Santa Fe, NM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Waterbury (Chair), Pam McAlpin, Bob Lee, Nancy Neskaukas, Jeff Whitney, Bryan Swift, Willie Begay, Kirk Rowdabaugh, Jay Ellington (Ex. Sec)

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: None

GUESTS: Ken Castro, John Philbin, Tom Beddow, John Kwait, Bob, Lineback, Kelly Castillo, John Selkirk, Leon Ben Jr, Karen Machaud, Dave Botts, Tom Olson, Chuck Maxwell

The meeting began at 0930, August 18, 2004. Minutes for the July 13-14, 2004 meeting were reviewed and approved.

FOLLOW-UP FROM 7/13 MEETING

- MAC Group Conference Call Format: Bill followed-up with Dave Cummings and will implement in the spring.
- MAC Group Conference Call Resource Outline: All members have seen and approved. Will implement during next MAC session
- AICG Charter: Will follow-up at AICG Meeting in September and bring to next SWCG meeting
- Satellite imagery: FEMA needs to release grant RFP... Nancy to monitor and submit.
- Hopi Agency IHC Proposal: Done.

TYPE 1 IMT SUPPORT

The Teams are working on an Agreement to establish funding between each of the Federal agencies. The Agreement will set direction on funds, methods of transfer, reimbursement, etc.

Decision: The SWCG will need to review the Agreement and sign. Effective date would be for FY-05. In the meantime, BLM-NM has some funds available to cover FY-04 requests.

ZONE CHAIR / IC DISCUSSION

The question came up as to funding for Type 2 Teams. SWCG members responded that Type 2 Teams are not managed by the SWCG, but rather the Zones and any funding should come from there. The NM Type 2 Team stated they have had a number of IC changes over the past several years, little team depth this past year, will have a Deputy in 2005, and provided some good training during the past season. They stated there needs to be better outreach to AFMO's for team participation, actions by Agency Administrators to allow other personnel to participate on teams, and follow-up to the issue of Operation folks being qualified T2 Ops Chiefs after being signed-off as Branch Directors on T1 teams.

The SWCG discussed the involvement of SWCG in Type 2 Team management including management of the teams in PL-4 and 5, linkage between trainees and participation on teams, use of AD's, difficulty in filling T2 rosters, scheduling and availability, collaborative management with Zone Boards, Type 3 teams, and the current policy on development and management of T2 teams.

Decision: The SWCG will meet with Type 2 Team Boards at the November meeting to set out an agenda on how to set up a team, organization of the team, and development of the T2 team system in conjunction with the T1 team system. A follow-up will occur at the January meeting to establish scheduling and availability (i.e. scheduling teams so that they are not always on-call), discuss trainees, etc. Wording in the SW Mobilization Guide will be changed to accommodate changes in the T2 Team policy.

SWA MAC CALLS

SWA MAC Conference call is open to all Zone Chairs. The MAC Group recognizes there has been some disconnect over the past few years pertaining to Zone participation, and states they will strive to open the communication lines better in the future. They would like to see more Zone Chair participation, especially when there are multiple large fires within a Zone. In the future all cascading mailing lists should go directly to Zone Chairs for distribution.

MEDIA GUIDELINES

USFS has distributed official letter stated their policy on media and fire operations. USDI letter will be following-up soon. Apparently some complaints on media access have been received in the USFS Washington Office on incidents that have occurred in the SWA, but SWCG members have no official response since the complaints have not been seen by SWCG members and the SWA fire community.

INCIDENT CLOSE-OUTS

Protocols are being developed for formal, internal close-outs and post incident reviews. The issue comes from the recent Lessons Learned Report and discusses cost containment, formatting, etc. Close-outs do not include public meetings. Close-outs with the public will be the responsibility of the Agency Administrator, not the IMT.

Decision: SWCG will insert in SWA Mob Guide IC/AA written expectations of public close-outs and the protocols established for internal incident close-out.

USFS REPRESENTATION CHANGE

Due to the recent changes in the USFS R3 FAM Organization, the Deputy position is a better position to be the representative on the SWCG than the current Director of Operations. The Deputy has greater authority in budgeting, planning, and commitment of funds for the Region.

Decision: Tom Beddow will transition with Bill Waterbury through January, when Bill will drop off the SWCG and Tom replaces him. Bill will give up the SWCG Chair to Pam McAlpin at the January meeting. For MAC Group representation, this can be handled by Tom Zimmerman, Tom Beddow, or Bill Waterbury.

LESSONS LEARNED

Bill distributed the review recommendations and follow-up. SWCG members reviewed and approved. A few changes were made to the document. Bill will provide bring to the SW Strategy. Contact Bill if you want a copy of the report.

THREE-TIER DISPATCH

The question is "How serious are we (SWCG) about the three-tier dispatch issue?" Since there are a number of agencies quite serious about moving the SWCG to three-tier, the SWCG believes it time to move in a direction that will result in establishing or not establishing this system. Overall, all agencies are going to have to work together to make this work. An extended discussion revolved around SWCC and Zone reviews, task group, changing name from Zones to Dispatch Centers, course of action, outcome, common vision, costs, radio communication systems, funding, alternatives to SW Strategy, use of Zone Boards, how FPA fits into picture, consolidation of dispatch offices, co-location, and large fire support in a three-tier system.

Decision: The SWCG decided to use the established Task Group pulled together by Dugger and change it to a Committee format. Dugger will remain as a member of the Committee. Pam will be SWCG Liaison. Pam will write letter to Committee for SWCG review detailing better, more specific direction to the Committee (... including development of initial charter). Zone Boards will be better involved by receiving copies of charter and actions taken by the Committee.

FPA/FPU UPDATE

Twenty slots have been established for the initial FPA training session (... Sept-Oct). Each FPU selects their own person for training. The first meeting of the FPA Committee will be scheduled soon and a number of FPU Groups are meeting in the next several weeks. Three options were offered for State/Local Resource involvement in FPA: (1) Single agency, (2) Interagency Federal, and (3) Interagency Federal, State & Local. A recommendation was made to go with of #2 since this will keep Federal funding at a specified level. #3 was not recommended since some areas where State/Local resources are greatest, this might have a negative effect on the local Federal units and what would occur if the State/Local units could not/would not respond. After several years, the State/Local units would be brought into the process. States response is they want to be involved in the process of FPA as it evolves and to be kept in the resource mix.

Decision: SWCG agreed to move forward with option #2, but not preclude the potential use of State/Local resources. Bob will draft direction to the FPA Committee and continue to work with State/Local offices.

FIRE USE TRAINING ACADEMY (FUTA)

FUTA is currently \$80K in the red due to some problems that exist in the agreements of transfer of funds between agencies. There seems to be a disconnect between the USFS and DOI Fiscal Offices, either the lack of understanding or misinterpretation of established Agreements. USFS to check things out with their fiscal office since, at least, one agency stated they were told that the USFS would not accept a transfer. Leon Ben, Jr, Chair of the FUTA Steering Committee, gave an update of happenings, including proposal to have The Nature Conservancy to be a member on the Committee, re-organization of staff to north end of Columbia Building, direction of Steering Committee, workshops and curriculum in WFU at the 200-300 level, FUTA faculty positions, etc. Leon will check with DOI Solicitor and USDA Council on issue related to Nature Conservancy participation on their committee. It was noted that agencies should inform FUTA when units will be burning so FUTA can send students. National Fuels Group meets every Thursday at 1400. Leon and Bryan will conference call with them during their next meeting.

SWCG COMMITTEES

The SWCG reviewed all Committees to see if there was a continue need.

- **AVIATION:** There are a number of issues this Committee could be working on (i.e. SEATS, helicopters, 2005 Plan for Heavy A/T's versus SEATS, severity, after-action reviews, Dromadiers).
Decision: Re-activate this Committee. Bryan is liaison and will provide direction to the committee including reviewing/re-writing their current charter, and issues related to Plan for 2005, interface with NMAC, protocols, MAFF's, etc. Suggested members were Larry Hindman (FS), Frank Miller (BLM-AZ), Denny Bridges (BIA), Milton Harper (FWS), and John Selkirk (BLM-NM). Other agencies need to provide Bryan with your selection. A chair needs to be nominated by November meeting.
- **COMMUNICATION:** There are number of issues this Committee could be working on (i.e. narrowband, Mexico bleeding over, etc).
Decision: Re-activate this committee. Bill is liaison and will follow-up. Suggested members were EdHirales (FWS), Dave Bott (BLM-NM), Frank Miller (BLM-AZ), Fernando Salinas (FS). Other agencies need to provide Bill with your selection. A chair needs to be nominated by November meeting.
- **DISPATCH:** Operational
- **ENGINE OPERATORS:** Operational
- **EQUIPMENT:** FS only. Drop from SWCG list.
- **FIRE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:** There are number of issues this Committee could be working on (i.e. work/rest, contracting, etc).
Decision: Re-activate this Committee. Willie is liaison and will provide direction to the committee including reviewing/re-writing their current charter. Suggested members: Linda Howell (BLM-AZ), Joe Grainey (FWS), Shana Miller (BLM-NM), Gerald Knox (BIA), Billy Zamora or Peggy Toya (FS). Other agencies need to provide Willie with your selection. A chair needs to be nominated by November meeting.
- **FIRE ECOLOGY/PRESCRIBED FIRE:** Work under AICG and NMCG
- **FIRE PROGRAM ANALYSIS:** Operational
- **FIRE USE TRAINING ACADEMY:** Operational
- **INFORMATION:** Operational
- **INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREWS:** Operational
- **OPERATIONS:** There are a number of issues this Committee could be working on (i.e. service first, team recruitment, qualifications, interface between the field and regional offices, AD's, EERA, Fire Use, etc).
Decision: Re-activate this Committee. Bill is liaison and will provide direction to the committee including reviewing/re-writing charter. Suggested members were Chris Wilcox (FWS), Dave Botts (BLM-NM), Irv Leach (BLM-AZ), Jon Lee (BIA). Other agencies need to provide Bill with your selection. A chair needs to be nominated by November meeting.
- **PREVENTION:** Operational
- **TRAINING:** Operational
- **T2 CREWS:** Needs chairperson and additional representatives.
- **WEATHER:** Operational

ICS-209 SUPPLEMENT

An updated version of the ICS-209 supplemental was distributed. The changes to the supplemental include wording such that units/teams, etc will insert fire behavior information specific to each days operation and use either Fire Behavior or NFDRS Fuel Models. SWCG members reviewed and accepted. An issue arose to reporting of ICS-209's on confine and WFU fires. The issue is whether a 209 is required on a daily basis and for how long.

Decision: Starting in 2005, the SWCG would like to see all 209's submitted (WF, Confine/Appropriate Management Strategy, and WFU) on a daily basis and through their control or out date. Intelligence Coordinator can decide once the fire has been contained if the 209 is needed to be input into the 209 Program through the control date on Wildland Fire (i.e. if a number of national resources remain on the incident beyond containment). Language will be inserted into the 2005 SWA Mob Guide to show this change.

CACHE VANS

Cache vans are established at each of the Area Caches (Prescott and Silver City) for use by Type 1 and Type 2 Teams. However, over the past several years a number of Type 3 Teams are ordering the vans. This is creating a demand on the cache's such that new vans will have to be set-up. A discussion on the issue revolved around line ordering for Type 3 teams, number of people in a Type 3 organization, incidents less than 150 people, general size of Type 3 and WFU teams, training and accountability, etc.

Decision: The SWCG decided that since Type 3 and WFU teams operational personnel can vary from 25- 200, there is no need for these organizations to order established cache vans, especially since the vans are set up to handle incidents of 250+ people. Working with the Cache Managers it was decided that short-size standard orders should be established at the Cache's for incidents with 50 or less personnel. These short-size standard orders would be ordered in 50 person increments. Language will be entered in the 2005 SWA Mob Guide to relay this change.

OTHER: (1) Cache Demob Specialist (CDSP) should be ordered for each incident that gets a cache van. A training program is established for CDSP and is in need of national attention. The training consists of accountability of items, costs, hazardous materials, etc.

Decision: Jeff will write letter of support on behalf of SWCG to get national training course established. He will send draft around for review.

(2) Type 3 organizations need Fire Loss training.

(3) There will be no ordering allowed 45 days beyond the incident.

MONSOON FIRE BUSINESS RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Chuck Maxwell presented to the SWCG a "Monsoon Fire Business Research Proposal" that would encompass a one-year study to "redefine the monsoon in quantitative terms that relate to fire business." Co-author of the project would be the Desert Research Institute, Climate, Ecosystem, and Fire (CEFA) Office. After a review of the project proposal, discussion revolved around funding, definition, ramifications, etc.

Decision: SWCG was highly impressed with the proposal and would like to see it move forward. They recommended Chuck work with Nancy to apply for a FEMA grant and as a back-up check out a possibility for a Joint Fire Science Grant. If necessary, it was recommended to broaden scope of the project to cover disasters in lieu of fire business since this topic has greater, far reaching ramifications beyond fire business, such as hydrology, drought, etc.

RAWS STATIONS

The RAWs Depot has overbooked the number of stations it can handle and is currently accepting no new stations into their maintenance program. This affects agencies outside of BLM. To keep stations certified, it will require contracting outside at a cost of roughly \$2,100.

NWS NATIONAL FIRE WEATHER CENTER

A proposal, introduced at the SWCG meeting by the State of New Mexico, is going through the system suggesting the establishment of a National Fire Weather Center in Boise. This center would cover most of the products currently being done at the Coordination Center level in Predictive Services.

Decision: On initial review, the SWCG does not support the establishment of the center. The SWCG will draft a letter to forward to the NIFC Directors showing no support for the center.

The next meeting of the Southwest Coordinating Group was scheduled for November 8-10, 2004 in Tucson, AZ, starting at 1300.

The meeting adjourned at 1200, August 19, 2004.

/s/ Bill Waterbury

Chair

Southwest Coordinating Group

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